

Pandemic Flu Business Letter



December 6, 2005

President Bush recently announced the Administration's National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza, a copy of which is enclosed. This strategy is geared toward preparing the country for the possibility of an influenza pandemic. As with any of the risks that we face as a country -- including natural disasters and the ongoing possibility of another terrorist attack -- it is imperative that all segments of society be prepared for such a threat. We are writing to you today on behalf of the Departments of Commerce, Health and Human Services, and Homeland Security to enlist your support in encouraging preparedness for such an event within the business community. We are requesting that you, as a business leader, focus on the need for planning within your organization for the possibility of an influenza pandemic.

It is important to note from the outset that there is not a human influenza pandemic at this time, nor can we say that a pandemic is imminent. However, as the President has noted, a new strain of influenza virus (H5N1) has been found in birds in Asia, and it has been shown that this virus can infect humans. If the virus mutates in certain ways, it is possible that it could lead to a pandemic. Because this threat does exist, we think it important for you to be knowledgeable about the risks associated with the threat of an influenza pandemic and, in turn, to be adequately prepared for the possibility of a pandemic that would have significant social and economic costs.

In order to safeguard against the threat of a pandemic and to mitigate the effects of a pandemic should one occur, President Bush has outlined a coordinated government strategy that includes the establishment of a new international partnership on Avian and Pandemic Influenza, the stockpiling of vaccines and antiviral medications, expansion of our early-warning systems here and abroad, and new initiatives for local and state level preparedness against the threat of a pandemic.

As we undertake these efforts, we are asking for your assistance as well. In order to ensure maximum preparedness, business should develop specific plans for the ways that you would protect your employees and maintain operations during a pandemic. Companies that provide critical infrastructure services, such as power and telecommunications, also have a special responsibility to plan for continued operation in a crisis and should plan accordingly. As with any catastrophe, having a contingency plan is essential.

We are asking for your assistance in preparing your organization for the possibility of an Avian Flu Pandemic. In addition to the National Strategy, we have enclosed some guidelines developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for preparing for the prospect of an influenza pandemic. These materials include a checklist to assist you in the planning for a pandemic outbreak as well as other comparable catastrophes. For ongoing informational updates in both preparing for and reacting to the possible onset of a pandemic, we also encourage you to go to the Federal Government's pandemic-related website: pandemicflu.gov. This site will be continually updated with the latest information.

Thank you for playing an important role in this effort. Should you have any questions regarding preparing your

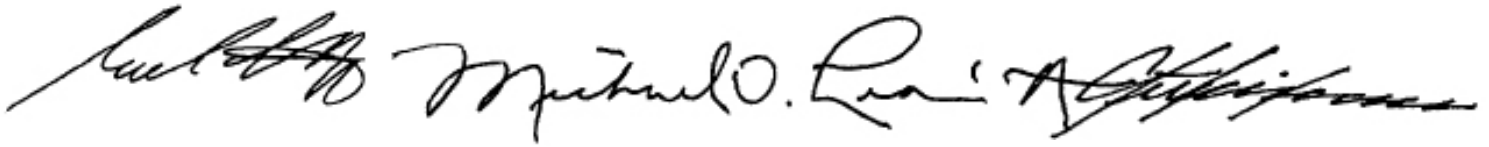
business for a pandemic, please contact our offices through the following staff:

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Dan McCardell
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James Caverly
Director, Infrastructure Partnerships Division
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Sincerely,

Three handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature on the left is Michael Chertoff, the middle one is Michael O. Leavitt, and the one on the right is Carlos M. Gutierrez.

Michael Chertoff
Secretary of Homeland
Security

Michael O. Leavitt
Secretary of Health and Human Services

Carlos M. Gutierrez
Secretary of Commerce